

***DOE Commission
on Fire Safety and
Preparedness***

**Sub Committee #2 – Fire Protection
Systems and Code Compliance
Conference Call #4
Key Discussion Items and Notes
May 30, 2001**

Key Discussion Items and Notes

The following is a brief summary of **key discussion items** from the fourth conference call of Subcommittee #2 – Fire Protection Systems and Code Compliance, held May 30, 2001. Conference call participants are listed at the end of these notes. Dan Arnold chaired the conference call.

The **next conference call** of the Subcommittee will be **the week of July 9**. Conference call number will be provided by e-mail when the date of the call has been arranged.

Key Discussion Items:

- Frank Russo spoke to three key items before the Subcommittee began their discussions. Items were:
 - Feedback from the Los Alamos National Laboratory National Lab (LANL) Site Visit.
 - DOE briefing on Contractor Issues.
 - Subcommittee Chairs meeting with Commission Chair to discuss direction of the Commission and possible interim report to the Secretary.
- Dan Arnold's agenda focused on three items:
 - Impressions following the Public Meeting and site visit at the Savannah River Site.
 - Comprehensive Review Schedule, including On-Site and Scoping Visits.
 - Commission direction for report to the Secretary.

See discussion notes below for details.

Next Steps of the Subcommittee were discussed as follows:

- Subcommittee Members will work with DOE on logistics for future On-Site and Scoping Visits.
- DOE to set up a call week of July 9th with Subcommittee with a contractor issues presentation.

Discussion Notes.

• **Frank's Discussion Items:**

1. Site Visit to LANL

- Commission Members at LANL: Debra McBaugh, Lorlee Mizell, John Till, Andrea Tuttle and guest Wayne Mitchell.

- The LANL staff did a good job arranging meetings with cognizant lab representatives and stakeholders (USFS, Pueblos, Park Service, etc...) to facilitate a review of the Cerro Grande Fire and related fire safety issues. This meeting served a number of purposes: the presentations provided useful background information on the LANL fire protection program and a productive forum for Subcommittee discussions and deliberations.
- The first day featured an information exchange between LANL and DOE representatives and the Commissioners regarding fire safety, remedial actions and budget allocations for corrective actions. Los Alamos Fire Chief MacDonald and Doug Tucker talked about improvements the County Fire Department is making as a result of the fire.
- The second day was spent with Stakeholders: representatives from the County Council, FEMA (discussing role with community), Forest Service (hydrologist), Santa Fe National Forest, an advocate for victims, and members of the Santa Clara Pueblo who gave a tour of reservation to view fire damage first hand.
- The last day the Subcommittee had a strategy session to talk about where the Commission is and where it's going. It was suggested that the Subcommittee Chairs meet with the Commission Chair to find a direction for Commission and discuss potential interim recommendations. There was a consensus that the Commission should exist until Comprehensive Reviews are completed.
- In Los Alamos there is an awareness of the continuing threat from wildfires, but no consensus on the need to implement necessary fire mitigation efforts, such as the creation of "defensible areas" around buildings. The lab is facing technical and other challenges in implementing mitigation strategies to prevent damage from runoff. There is significant concern about the potential for future damage. Hydrophobic soil conditions that resulted from the fire limit permeation of rainwater. Flood diversions may help, but heavy rain run off deterrents have not been tested. The area received \$342 million from Congress for Emergency Response activities such as DND, and reacting to buildings to avoid contamination through flooding.

2. DOE briefing on Contractor Issues.

- DOE will give an ESH brief on contracting issues. First brief is June 14 for Subcommittee #3. All other Subcommittees need same brief via teleconference call. This Subcommittee will try to schedule a the briefing for the week of July 9th

3. Subcommittee Chairs meeting with Commission Chair to discuss direction of the Commission and possible interim report to the Secretary.

- Although the Subcommittee's Scope of Work will enable them to provide constructive feedback on the Comprehensive Review, more input is needed. A possible Interim Report to the Secretary may be necessary. The Final Report will include findings from the Subcommittee and the Chairman will provide a Summary Report to Secretary with the key recommendations, as well as Appendices that provide back up to the foundation of the recommendations.

Dan's Agenda Items

1. Impressions following the Public Meeting and site visit at the Savannah River Site.

- **Paul:** enjoyed visiting site and was impressed with the way things are handled. Seeing Emergency Response Center and Fire Station was helpful (equipment was impressive), demonstration and ecology lab discussion was helpful.

Disappointed in 1) Not seeing Operations (active or not active). 2) Alarm Center: they still rely on the telephone system to get message from operations to alarm center. Sophisticated instruments should tie into the alarms.

- **Tony:** was impressed with the Fire Alarm Systems and approach dealing with multitude

of vendors and the practice of partial fire sprinkler usage in Operations Center. They have 4-hour firewalls around the Operations Center, but this does not go with HPR practices. Overall view of Fire Protection from Systems standpoint from facility or portion of facility being renovated with budget impacting what you can do and leaves holes in protection. Controlled burning and forces fuel reduction system surpasses many others.

- **Dan:** The facility was well protected and secure. At the Public Meeting there was concern about how some view of importance or value of Commission's work. He is concerned that we were not hearing everything we needed to hear. There was an expectation that we would hear from site people to get down where the real problems lie.
- **Dennis:** Pointed out that there are a variety of degrees of openness due to management review of presentations, which made some presentation seem more formal. What is an informal setting to facilitate a candid discussion.

This Subcommittee should meet with site engineers and contractor fire protection engineers. The day-to-day operation individuals will give a better perspective in order for the Commission to provide constructive, helpful input.

- **Tony:** He thought that the Public Meeting elements were helpful regarding the debate toward regulatory approaches getting results in DOE vs. reference standards (budgetary process basis). Overall Commission goal was enhanced by this meeting by putting issues on the table.
- **DOE impressions:** It was useful to have "political" budgetary issues discussed. Proposed minimum requirements with Rule Making is helpful– but this is not likely due to lack of support and the process is long and drawn out. The Regulatory process is quite cumbersome.
- **Paul:** Do the changes in National Code environment have any affect?
- **DOE:** It is relevant regarding 1710 Promulgation and how it will affect DOE. There is disagreement that it is appropriate to adopt standards without some flexibility.

2. Comprehensive Review Schedule, including On-Site and Scoping Visits.

- This Subcommittee wanted to be involved with the logistics of trying to participate in relevant On-Site or Scoping Visits for their scope of work.
- Scoping visits usually last 1 week: will there be leeway of what you can do that week.
- There will be an introductory presentation of read ahead materials to get an idea of what the scope will be so we can prepare to ask questions. DOE will run some occurrences on fire safety and background on the site to be visited. DOE will know what facilities they want to look at. Site will enable DOE to choose what's relevant from site representatives and see where attention is needed for improvement. DOE will look at pertinent documents and interview management folks.
- The Commission will be able to see Operations but will require clearances.
- Commission Members will be able to see facilities and get an understanding of facility and fire protection systems. DOE remains concerned on how active Commission Members will be on scoping visit as "Observers." Commission is actually observing the Review Team. There can be both a Commission visit and a scoping simultaneously.
- Subcommittee should arrange a Site Visit. One Member could attend the scoping visit portion and another could attend the actual on-site review, where you hear where the real problems are. Dan wants on-site review and Paul prefers scooping. There should be some overlap and information exchange among all Subcommittee Members.
- Commission needs to review the Operations "process" in order to sign on to

Comprehensive Review.

- The first week is just data collection where inspectors do walk downs and interviews. Mid week, there is more activity. Over the weekend there is a Team Meeting to do analysis on issues, identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps. During the second week, the Team fills the gaps. Later part of first week is opportune – Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, for Team Meetings and Management debrief will give you key issues from site. Saturday.

Site Visit Preference:

- **Paul:** January 2002 - Strategic Petroleum Reserve & Idaho (INEEL)
- **Tony:** Los Alamos and Oak Ridge (Wed-Wed) or Brookhaven, if necessary
- **Dan:** Los Alamos (Mon-Sat)

3. Commission direction for Report to the Secretary.

- This issue has been tabled until Subcommittee Chairs meet with Chairman

Outstanding Issue: Presentation of Integrated Safety Plan which should be presented in person.

Next Conference Call

The **next conference call** of the Subcommittee will be the **week of July 9**. Conference call number will be provided by e-mail when the date of the call has been arranged.

Conference Call Participants

- Commission Members:
 - Dan Arnold
 - Dr. Paul Croce
 - Tony O'Neill
- Absent Member:
 - Kathleen Almand
- U.S. Department of Energy
 - Frank Russo, Designated Federal Official
 - Dennis Kubicki, Senior Fire Protection Engineer
 - Kirk Russell
- RPI
 - Bill Hamilton
 - Melinda Watters